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(SNP104) Blanche Rickard interviewed by  
Dorothy Noble Smith, transcribed by Sharon G.  
Marston

Blanche Rickard

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ORAL HISTORY PROGRAM

SHENANDOAH NATIONAL PARK

NARRATOR: Mrs. Blanch Rickard

INTERVIEWER: Dorothy Noble Smith

DATE: May 26, 1978

Transcribed by:

Sharon G. Marston

Completed Date:

October 27, 1979

I: I'm interviewing Mrs. Blanch Rickard who has a great knowledge of people living around the Thornton Gap area, Frazier Hollow and around there.

N: Yea

I: You say there were ten children in your family?

N: Yea, and they are all gone but me and my twin sister...and she is blind...her mind has got bad.

I: That's Mrs. Cliser?

N: Yes.

I: I didn't realize she was <sup>your</sup> a twin.

N: Oh yes she is.

I: You know you don't resemble each other.

N: No, not too much. We was 80 years old then. And this one over here in the little round frame...that's my picture <sup>when</sup> I was about 40.

I: Alright. There were ten children in your family. How did your father support you? Did he have a farm?

N: He had a farm

I: And you raised everything?

N: He raised everything. Wasn't much we had to buy. We dried apples, <sup>beans</sup> even and things like that.

I: Did you dry cherries?

N: Yes indeed.

I: You did?

N: yea

I: How about huckleberries?

N: Yea, we dried huckleberries.

I: Well, bless your heart. They only did that down in the other end.

Did they..many of the people dry things..

N: No not many.

I: Was it very rocky..the gardens?

N: No our garden wasn't. They might have been before I was born. They might have picked all those rock out...a lot of people did.

I: So they plowed

N: Yea, yea! No, no rocks in the gardens.

I: Did you have cows and horses.

N: Yes indeed cows and horses

I: Uhhuh and you made ~~us~~ cheese...

N: butter..cheese...all that stuff.

I: Did you make soap?

N: Lye soap.

I: Isn't that wonderful soap.

N: Yea..yes indeed.

I: This is marvelous. Have you any idea of the herbs.

The people used to get themselves well?

N: My mother used to know a lot of them; but, the only ones I know

is ~~pipsisley weed~~ <sup>pipsisawa tea</sup> ~~pea~~ that grows in the mountain.

I: Oh, that grows in the mountain?

N: And that is so good for kidneys.

I: Kidneys?

N: Oh yes. And I never used the wild carrot; but she said that was

good. Wild carrots' a big a big flat bloom...grows up

pretty high...a big <sup>green</sup> ~~queen~~ colored bloom.



I: And what would she use that for?

N: That was for kidneys. She knows a lot of things we never did learn.

I: Now isn't that a shame because they know now that all these medicines are good and have a lot of quality.

N: That's right. I have a book on ~~such as~~ <sup>a lot of stuff. I</sup> that. Got it years ago. And I'm telling you they tell you what a lot is good for; but I don't know about a lot of the ~~leaves~~ <sup>teas</sup> their talking about because my mother didn't know it all either.

I: Yea, uhuh

N: And they was about the only ones I ever learned. Peach leaves are good for some things. *Just different things.*

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I: Mrs. Moyer says that when people were ill you would go take care of them.

N: Yes I would.

I: Now what illnesses would they have?

N: Well, uh, my sister come pretty near getting pneumonia...I waited on her.

I: Oh!

N: And uh Dr. Ed Brumback was doctoring her...

I: Oh, he lived in Luray didn't he?

N: Well he lived down here on the farm before; but, he did move into Luray and he was our doctor...and before cars come around; he would drive up to our home way up <sup>back</sup> in the mountains, in a buggy...and charge \$2 for the trip.

I: No!

I: When babies were born did they have a doctor come?

N: My mother, doctored all the people around.

I: A midwife?

N: Yes, she did. I never did. Tell you the truth, I never had no children. I raised a couple. I partly raised Woodrow..his mother and father died. I raised another child...she lives in Gaithersburg. She had this Swine Flu. Last time I talked to her...trying to walk with a walker..trying awful hard to walk <sup>about</sup> ~~a~~ path. I think she'll be okey.

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I: Sure, yea.

N: Show you her picture. I took her when she was six years old, and she was <sup>an</sup> awful good child.

I: Alright, now, the midwives, pretty generally brought the children into the world.

N: My mother brought almost all the neighbors <sup>children</sup> in the world. She was good at that.

I: Oh. Was there any diseases they had particularly? like did they...

N: Diptheria.

I: They had diptheria.

N: Yea. I didn't have it; but my oldest sister did.

I: How about the flu <sup>disease</sup> of 1917?

N: Well they had the flu, but didn't go too hard. <sup>with them.</sup>

I: Good.

N: Killed a lot of people...some of the neighbors and all. My older sisters had diptheria before I was born. They pulled ~~her~~ thru.. but some neighbors didn't.

I: Again Dr. Brumback would come..The doctor from Luray would come.

N: He lived down where they call Springfield. Yea he would come.

After I was married they called me one night to come up.. my sister., Said she was sick and they didn't know what was wrong, so Woodrow took me up and I found out that there was something bad wrong. Tried to get the doctor the next morning, and he couldn't <sup>get him at the time.</sup> come. Finally did get him in the evening and he come.. my sister-in-law lived up there. She was very uneasy about <sup>her</sup> him and so was I..and when he come he told us that she was right on the verge of pneumonia..very worse kind and if something ain't done...<sup>she</sup> might not make it. And I said tell me what to do..<sup>course</sup> course me and my twin sister was only one that could...

He said "Can you give a needle" and I said "never tried, but I'll try."  
How about something to put under <sup>her</sup> his arm. Do that 11 times. Said he'd be back next day. He didn't tell us a thing to do but that. So after he left I said I tell you one thing. I know what my mother would have done...I'm going to mix up some <sup>glase</sup> turpentine, jape<sup>n</sup>ese oil, lard and all that stuff. I'm gonna mix it up and I'm gonna bath her good with it and inthose days we had no way to keep things hot..we had the stove a running and we had big warm clothes..two <sup>pieces</sup> of warm cloth..one would hold one on the stove while the other would take it in til it got a little cool..and we did that all night long. He said she was just on the verge of going back in to it. I don't think he had any hopes <sup>at all</sup> of her not doing it..If she does she won't last long.

I: And it did cure her.

N: And the next morning I took her temperature and I said to <sup>Carry</sup> Claire "she's better". And she always did say it after she got better

*Carry*  
that ~~Glaire~~ and me was the ones that saved her.

I: Yes. You used what?

N: Lard, turpentine--spirits of turpentine--, japanese oil, it was good and let's see what else was there. I reckon that's about all. Put all that in lard and melted and made it hot and bathed good with it and then put hot cloths on it.

I: That is wonderful.

N: It is. That's right we did. The doctor said he'd be up in the evening. Well next morning when I took her pulse, temperature, I said she's better. I believe we got that broke. So ~~Glaire~~ *Carry* said I hope we have and when he came after dinner...I can see him yet. She had her hair cut about like mine, and I walked in the room where he was. They always got on the bed on their knees to examine..I can see him yet..he got on the bed on his knees and *got off the bed, stepped back a yard and* he said you'll learn to eat another bushel of onions ~~yet~~.. That's true. I mean she couldn't get up yet...but

I: You had broken it

N: Yea, that's right

I: That is simply beautiful.

N: Yea, that was my mother's remedy, you know, and I knew that.

I: Did you ever use *paulticos* like with corn meal and onions

N: yea she did.

I: How about ~~s~~nake bites. Do you know what they did for snake bites.

N: Well ..what I was gonna tell you my brother's boys was out and one got bit by a ~~s~~nake and theother happened to have a knife in his pocket and he split it and sucked the blood out. *That's all that was necessary.*

I: Huh.

N: There's a lot of little things if we just knew about it.

I: Yea, that's right. yea.

N: But my mother..oh she was good. I couldn't tell you the babies she brought into the world. They would come at midnight after her..and I was small and I hated..you know I wouldn't want her to go. I'd lay in the bed and cry and cry.

I: I know. You know I've heard <sup>a</sup>stories that when there was a funeral, in fact I heard from quite a number of people, that they didn't embalm the bodies.

N: That's right.

I: And the women, they had a real wake. they would cry, weep, and wail. Is that true?

N: That's right. Yes it is.

I: Makes a lot of sense because they were all such close families.

N: I kept watch a few of them. You know there was no parlor to take them ~~to~~ and you had to get them ready yourself. *so I helped to do that.*

I know one of the men in the park died and I happened to be up there. It was my ~~brother's~~..brother-in-law's daddy, and I had gone up to sit up..sat up all night and next morning he died and there wasn't nobody to do anything. So it happened that the boy my daddy ~~raised~~ *raised*, *Charlie Burnett*..I don't reckon you knew him..

well he happen to come up there *I guess he was interested in business* so I called the *man he was* undertaker and we had to measure and all to tell how big to make

the casket....so Charlie helped me to measure..and I washed him part the way and Charlie finished it. *That's the way we had it.*

I: Yea, right.

N: That's right.

I: Well then when the time of the funeral. Would everybody stay there at the grave til it was completely filled.

N: Yea.

I: Yea, I wish they did that nowadays.

N: I do to

I: Because that shows such respect.

N: I do to. Because. Yea it does and I think to turn around and walk away before it is filled it looks so *awful*.

I: No. Did they engrave on the monuments?

N: Huh.

I: Did they write the names on the monuments?

N: Yea, that was done a long time ago. We had a home graveyard. My brother, father, and mother. And they are buried in there. They engraved ~~it too~~ *the stones*.. I don't remember who done it, but it was done.

I: Uhhum..Huh in that area did they have any people that did make moonshine?

N: I heard they did. Course I couldn't say positively. I heard they did.

I: It makes sense because they had a lot of apples; and, they raised a lot of good things, and might as well...

N: Well, I tell you the truth. My daddy had a big apple orchard. And of course we'd carry apples down and peel them and my mother said.. *carry* ~~Glaire~~ and me wasn't born yet...and she said now you girls get to work and get them apples, peel them and slice them and dry them and you can sell them and get some money out of them. And we did.

I: How..Do you remember how much you got.

N: No. It wasn't too much, but you know a little was...

I: Sure..How about applebutter boiling? Did you do applebutter boiling.

N: Yes indeed.

I: *When* ~~How~~ would you do? ~~When?~~ *In the evening?*

N: Put them on one morning and sometimes boil til 11:00 at night. We had to get it done. *sometimes*

I: Did the neighbors help; and you do it all at once.

N: No. See their was enough of us to stir and do our own. We didn't have to have anybody. But they did do that at other places. *Neighbors went in and*  
*got* a big kick out of it.

I: Yea they use to have a lot of fun. had dancing, music, eating and.

N: But what I was gonna tell you, *my daddy* we had a big apple orchard and he hauled apples to the still house.

I: Where was that?

N: Out here somewhere in Luray. I don't know where. I never was there.

I: They didn't want you to know about such things.

N: I never seen him..oh I seen him take a taste; but he never did care too much for that. *no wasting of apples.*

I: Uhhum, yea.

N: The apples would *have* wasted and of course that was one way to save them. Lot of people wanted it....which I think maybe wasn't the thing to do.

I: I don't think it was wrong. It was a lot easier to carry the whiskey than to carry a whole barrel of apples.

N: Well he had a way...he was getting old..you know how we take it.. he wasn't too well, he had the old time pneumonia and he had it three times and the third time he passed out. And that was..he went nine days fore there was a change. They'd just lay and you'd think he was gone and he wasn't. And the ninth day would tell the tale . Now that's the way it was. And I know

my daddy raised another boy he got in what they called the Poor House. He was only four years old. Me and <sup>Carley</sup>~~Clare~~ wasn't much older, but I remember when my daddy come with him on the horse. Sitting in front of him from way up there in that Poor House.

I: You were kind. You had a nice family.

N: And raised him.

I: Yea. How about school.

N: We had a school <sup>right</sup> ~~way~~ up there close to the park. I don't think *the Park took that place* it might have, but I don't think much it did. Just a little schoolhouse. In them days they didn't have much in Luray like they do now. And then when you reached seventh grade, that's all you *got*.

I: Well you did a lot better than most. Some went only to the third grade.

N: Seventh grade we went.

I: What did they teach.

I: Was this for six months out of the year or what?

N: Six months. Five or six.

I: What did they teach?

N: Well, they taught .. had spelling books, arithmetic, reading books, geography.

I: Geography?

N: yes. and grammer. Then you had what they called a copy book they learnt you to write in. And that's about all.

I: That is tremendous.

N: Did you ever see any of the old time dictionaries?

I: No.

N: Well I'll just show you one..



N: They'd put us in a row and give ~~us~~ out the words. *Let us turn one another down.*

I: Ah, a spelling bee.

N: If they'd miss it, you spell, it *then* and you'd go up above.

and then they'd give us head those that went ahead.

I: Oh, great. Ever give you any prizes?

N: No, I don't think they done that.

I: How did you celebrate Christmas?

N: At my home?

I: Yea

N: Well we always made up a lot of good things..food..cake, pies,  
and all that *bailed a* ~~old~~ ham. We had plenty hogs; we butchered at home  
and just stuff like that. Then sometimes some of the neighbors  
come in and we'd sit down and have a good meal together.

I: Oh, that's nice.

N: You know I cooked for six when I was eleven years old..I never will  
forget it. My mother told the ones just before us..you know the  
two girls..they would take turns..one cooked one meal and the other  
the next. Of course, they knew all about cooking; and, one day my  
mother said "listen girls, I want you to take one of them little  
ones one week and the other the next and learn them to cook." And  
that's what they done. And when we was eleven we done our own  
cooking and nobody bothered us.

I: Yea.

N: And *they let us at it.* Mother had one of her girl friends  
to spend a couple days. And, uh, of course she was gonna make me  
do the cooking...they laughed at me afterwards..it was kinda funny.  
I heard her say it while I was in the kitchen *getting dinner.* I heard my mother  
say it to this lady. Amanda you ought to be proud of your little

girl the way she can cook. Cause she **had** been eating there for a couple days. She says "I am". It perked me up so much that I walked out..my hands on my hips and I said "it don't make any difference what it is, I can cook anything that anybody else can cook."

I: I love it. I think that's wonderful.

N: They always teased me about that.

I: Did you ever shoot off firecrackers at Christmas?

N: Yes

I: Did you celebrate any other holidays?

N: Well, not specially we didn't. You know we had to work them days. People had to really work them days to make a living.

I: Yea, that's right.

N: You had children you certainly had to make a living and raise them. *and you didn't have too much time off.*

I: Did you have any corn cob dolls?

N: No, no we didn't. We had regular dolls. One little doll.

*now*  
We didn't get things like they do..we had plenty to eat understand and all. But all the toys they give people these days.

I: It's a waste.

N: It is

I: It ridiculous.

N: He'd always bring us one something..My brother run a store in town and my daddy would go out their before Christmas..well just before Christmas day..they had buckets they would put candy..this hard candy and he would send a half a bucket..my brother would..up there for Christmas for all of us. That's when my daddy got us oranges

and things like that and one little toy. and I can show you one  
how that my daddy got us.

I: Did you ever eat any beef while you were up there growing up.

N: Yea we killed it. Fatten <sup>em</sup> ~~it~~ and kill it.

I: Did you allow the thecattle <sup>cows + hogs</sup> to roam as they wanted or did you  
fence them in.

N: Fence them in. And then when they had a young beef maybe a  
young one a year old, not tough, <sup>maybe a year old,</sup> they would fatten it and kill it.  
The trouble is <sup>well</sup> they had no things like now to keep things in.

I: Yea, so how did you work your vegetables to keep them. Did you  
dig a trench or did you use a root celler?

N: They had a cellar, and they had a spring house, running water. And  
they had a great big thick <sup>plank</sup>. I don't know.. <sup>sort of a trench</sup>  
and it run down to the milk box. And we carry things in there.  
Milk that we wanted and <sup>butter</sup> other milk and other stuff and it was  
right good and cold and that was the only way we had to keep them.

I: How about cabbages and turnips?

N: Oh we had them buried. Yes indeed, mymother would dig a big place about  
that tall and dig up the cabbages and set the heads down in there  
and let the stems stick out and cover them up with dirt and go out  
there in the wintertime and just pull up one.

I: And they were just as fresh as could be?

N: Yes indeed.

I: It was a marvelous method for storing things. How about when you  
went to the store. Did you take chicken and eggs to exchange.

N: Yes, chicken and eggs and when I lived over there I took chicken  
and eggs and cream. <sup>we milked about 4 ~~hens~~ cows</sup> I had a place to keep. <sup>it over her</sup> we musta milked about  
four cows..I had a place to keep it when I lived over here..

I: Sure

N: I'd sell my cream-- eggs.

I: Now would he give you cash for that?

N: Yes.

I: Where was the store?

N: It was right close to the depot I think, in Luray.

I: Uhhuh. So <sup>they</sup> ~~that~~ gave you cash and in exchange you would buy what you needed.

N: That's exactly right.

I: But you didn't need much .. to buy much, did you?

N: No. We raised it all.

I: Coffee

N: Course we had to have clothes, shoes. We didn't get rich off it but it brought you through.

I: Sure. How about sorghum. Did you make sorghum?

N: Well some people did.

I: Uhhum.

N: We didn't. They would grind it all up. I've seen it done. Took horse..go around and around and grind stalk all up. I don't know too much about it, but I've seen it.

I: How did your husband court you?

N: How?

I: Uhhum.

N: Well I don't exactly know. We had..they had a preaching up what they call Rocky Branch Schools. <sup>we always went,</sup> And one time he come up there to preach. Finally I think he asked one of his cousins something about me. Course, I don't know..I thought <sup>Carry</sup> ~~Glaire~~ and me looked

alike..maybe we didn't. So he wanted her to ask if it was alright  
for him to come up there <sup>Sunday-evening.</sup> Well I was actually too young.

I: How old were you?

N: I wasn't over 15. But being a good fellow and from a good family,  
my parents didn't pick on him. The only thing my father was strict  
with ~~us~~. He didn't want boys..we had an extra room ~~us~~ girls for boys  
but he didn't want us to sit up late. We had a bed time and that's  
the time you'd better go. He didn't want us to run around after  
night with boys. He wouldn't hear of that. So my sister-in-law  
was a going..after we got acquainted, he'd come up there a few  
times...was well acquainted and was a going down to his home you  
know *to see him* so she asked me to go along. And she was actu-  
ally a working it all she could cause she knew this fella. !

I: I think it's just great.

N: My mother told her I could go, but bring her back with you. Well we  
went and that evening..I don't know why they didn't say something  
before but it was time to start and they kept on at me to play a  
couple pieces on the organ...so I couldn't hardly refuse them and  
she said well we just can't wait any longer, we got to go do our  
work and of course, he said I'll bring her home and that was the  
worse thing..and they left.

I: Oh no.

N: Yes, they did. Well I got home after sundown. <sup>*it was*</sup> It wasn't dark; but  
you just could see us coming up the lane. Well my daddy didn't  
say too much about that. Just said we was too young to be with  
boys. He was very strict and my mother was too. So, uh, went on  
that way..they didn't say too much about it.

I: Yea.

N: But anyway he was very particular about when they, uh, and he was  
that way about the other two older girls. *when they had boy-friends* Ten o'clock was ~~our~~ <sup>his</sup> bed  
time and he meant ten o'clock. So Elmer stayed one night, it was  
just about ten minutes after, <sup>10:00</sup> and I knew I was gonna hear from it.  
So at the table the next morning he said "*listen* ~~Now~~ Blanch, ten o'clock  
<sup>13</sup> ~~was~~ my bedtime and I mean bedtime and now those boys gotta get  
out" and that was all he said. But I knew he meant that very thing.

I: How old were you when you got married.

N: I was <sup>only</sup> 17. We was married 56 years.

I: O how beautiful.

N: And I got a good man, I really did.

I: Yea

N: I was .. I guess .. too young, and I think you don't study over things  
like that.. I think they knew he ~~was~~ <sup>they can't say</sup> an alright fellow. *anything, it*  
I: Sure. *could have been*  
*worse.*

N: And they hated to say anything.. coulda been worse. They was  
sharp enough for that. So they let him come.

I: Yea, right.

N: Well he come a couple years.

I: How did your daddy make a living?

N: My daddy?

I: Uhhum.

N: Well just a putting things out on the farm and selling it <sup>corn</sup> and stuff  
like that. Hay, Corn. Course we used a right smart hay--corn too,  
but he put out right much.

I: Sure. How far was your nearest neighbor?

N: Oh, actually if you was outdoors, you could hollar.

I: Oh, uhhum.

N: You mean at my home?

I: Yea, uhhum..when you were growing up.

N: That was my brother's family. We was on one little hill and you went down into a little hollow; and down in there was the spring house, extra spring house, was spring water and running all the time and lots of time if <sup>we</sup> you wanted something to stay real cool we'd take it down there. Actually it was on their side but they didn't care; they'd do the same thing. We done a whole lot of that too.

I: Yea right.

N: And then when she wanted to go away; we was just a little older than her oldest boy...why hum she would call over and ask mother if we could come and stay *with us while she went to town.* So she'd make us go whether we wanted to go or not.

I: Were you ever troubled with wildlife? Did rabbits get in the gardens?

N: No we weren't.

I: I wonder why.

N: I understand <sup>now</sup> they have trouble up in there now.

I: We can't raise anything at home because of the rabbits. Did you have dogs? Maybe the dogs kept them away.

N: We had a dog, but we had to keep her in the yard. Reason we had to keep her in the yard, if we didn't she had to have a collar and she hated the collar. He asked the warden if we kept her in the yard, could we leave the collar off and he said yes, but be sure to do that. Let me tell you funny thing. Really kinda funny. She was there one night when we come from church. Outside hollaring and hollaring. And I had had a dog once before that left and was killed

on the highway and I said I would never have anymore. Well when we drove in that night, little puppy bout like that at the gate.. couldn't get in and it was hollaring..<sup>get in</sup>couldn't ~~get in~~ and I couldn't take it..So I went and let it in. Elmer said you better not do that. You said you wasn't gonna have any more. I said I can't help that. I can't see that little dog like that..<sup>stunned so I fed it</sup>and next morning <sup>it was</sup> all over the yard a playing .. and it was the best dog I ever had. And anyway if I'd tramp on her toe she <sup>might</sup>wouldn't hollar, she just sorta <sup>licked</sup>looks at me. Just looked like she hated so bad she done it. If she was on the walk and somebody would drive up, if it was my home folk whe would wag her tail and if it was a stranger she would bark like she was gonna get em.

N: Smart Dog.

I: And the funny thing that happend. We started to clean outside the yard..Mr. Bolen lived right up the road from us..On that side not the side next to Campbell's. And we was a cleaning out and he said let's let her out, <sup>she won't go anywhere.</sup>I said well alright. Woods come right to the road. Finally I looked up and I couldn't see her. I said she was in the woods. She wouldn't stay long, I knew that. He said she'll be back directly. Directly here she come. I was standing close to the yard, but not in the yard. She come and she had something white in her mouth and she laid <sup>it</sup>right down between my feet, and it was an egg <sup>and</sup>a fresh one. And I said where in this world did she get that egg. Andshe turned around and wagged her tail and went on. I throught to myself let's see what she'll do. Directly here she come with another egg, <sup>she laid at my feet.</sup>And I said come and show me where you are getting them eggs. She took me right to the nest and was seven more. I've been so sorry I didn't let her carry them all to me. I think she would have.



I: What kind of eggs were they.

N: Hen eggs. The hen had made a nest up there in the bushes. *We had chickens, you know.*  
And I'll tell you why I think she donethat. She would go with me to gather the eggs ever evening. I had two sides of the hen house together and I would go into one side and come out and lay the bucketdown and she'd lay down by it and I'd go in the other side and get them and when I'd put them in the bucket she'd get up and follow me back to the house. She knew not to break them eggs.

I: Yea, right, yea.

N: Well now did you know the names

I: Well I have here a map and I thought when I finish the interview, maybe you could show me on the map where the people lived.

N: Well I don't think I can do much of that.

I: Well we'll see. You were gonna give me the names...

N: I could give you the names and maybe you could find out some other way.

I: Alright.

N: These are the ones that was in the park when they got out. they knew they was gonna set them out. There was only one they set out. I'll give you the others first. (Note that I am typing names from the list that has been included in the tape box)

Mr. Lewis Willas, Mr. Love Woodard, Mr. David Judd, Mr. Kip Adkins, Mr. Phillip Ellis, Mr. John Bradley, Mr. Theodore Grandstaff, Mr. Will Beahm, Mr. Robert Beahm, Mr. Jake Smith, Mr. Benton Smith, Mr. *McLamb* Cliser. All went on their own but Mr. Cliser. He was set out..year 1936.

I wrote it down and had it on a piece of paper. I wrote it down

after you called.

I: Now this Beahm..were they from around Beahm's gap.

N: Yes, only they was up above it a little.

I: Up above it. I know Benton Smith..Oh Mr. Cliser, I know about that.

N: Mr. Cliser, I'll tell you about that.

I: I know about that. I interviewed his daughter.

N: Did you? Anyways lately?

I: Just a couple months ago.

I was going to ask when they had to move out, they had cattle, hogs, and chickens? Did they take them with them.

N: Yea, I think they did. I think they took everything.

I: Uhhum. The women, I know they liked their flowers, shrubs and boxwoods etc. Did they take slits from those when they left?

N: I really don't know. They could have. I really don't know.

I: Were they all fairly contented. Except for I know Mr. Cliser.

N: Yea, yea.

I: They felt they were getting something better.<sup>?</sup> Did they realize they could no longer make a living there.<sup>?</sup>

N: Who the ones that moved out.

I: Yea.

N: No I don't think so. I think they was a making a living. But they knew they was gonna get them out. I think that's <sup>the reason</sup> why they just pulled out before.

I: Yea

N: Course I went up there. His daughter come by there and she was just a carrying on, crying and carrying on. Said putting poppa out.

I: Yea, that is what I think is one of the worse.

N: I went up there and if you could have been up there. I'll never forget as long as I live. Malcolm Atkins a neighbor right above *him* had come down there *made Carry* ~~to make Claire~~ get outside and he come down there and went up and got the car and come down beside the yard. And they talked and Dave Fox...they had a long porch..had *he* a gun. I had *left* ~~met~~ the girl I raised..showed you a while ago and when Merle come by a crying so terribly made her nervous and I left her *crying* ~~behind~~. And I felt uneasy about her so I said I'm a going in the house and call home. *Carry* ~~Claire~~ said Blanch you better not. Said they ain't gonna let you call home. I said let me or not I'm a going. I gotta right to see how Gladys is and I'm a going. And so I went right on in and Dave Fox and Lucas followed me. And there was a little saucer sitting on the mantle piece with a little change and I called Gladys and asked if she was alright. She said yes. She wanted to know how things were and I said pretty bad. I said I'll be home as soon as I can. She said well. I turned around and started back out. *They* ~~Handed~~ this little saucer to me and I said you'd taken the rest of the stuff might as well take that. I turned and went out. Couldn't get *Malamsie* to talk. He knew if he didn't say nothing couldn't do nothing, *they couldn't do nothing* So they said they was going to take him to town and make him talk. So they got him and took him to town and I started down to the car and the youngest *fat* .. I reckon he's dead now

I: I think so.

N: He said..uh he meant *Carry* ~~Claire~~, my sister..take her too poppa. *Carry* ~~Claire~~ heard him and said you shut your mouth. Well that was all of that. Well started sitting everything out on the roadside. She had a

*making sandwiches*  
~~the nicest pies~~, a good business. Baked the nicest pies. People  
were stopping and stopping and I don't know how many hams she  
had. Anyway they took him out there and he still wouldn't talk  
they had to bring him back. Made up his mind he wasn't going to  
say nothing. So brought him back. Anyway they commenced to set-  
ting everything out and <sup>carry</sup> ~~Claire~~ had bought new blinds for the  
windows <sup>with fringe on the edge</sup> and hadn't had them up long and so they couldn't get  
~~these~~ <sup>things</sup> out fast enough and they went and got *OK Bar and with*

*If they*  
young boys and they went to taking them blinds down dropping them  
down in a sack without folding them. ~~They could~~ have boarded them  
up and tied something around them a little bit..deed that's the  
truth..Brand new blinds and you know what they done to them. And  
they had them boys

When I went in to call..I forgot that..they had Claire's bureau  
drawers open going through the drawers. I don't know whichone I  
think it was Lucas.. and uh I never said a word and that evening  
it turned cool and <sup>carry was shivering and had no</sup> ~~Claire had a~~ wrap of no kind to put ~~on so~~ <sup>for they had</sup>  
carried everything out in piles. So Merle's husband was  
in there. I said Bergie this woman is a gonna take cold. She's a  
shivering..no wrap to put on..what are we gonna do? Well you know  
how Bergie was. You got it on?

I: You want me to shut it off?

N: I just want to tell you what he said.

She had to go somewhere and they brought her on down to Ed Fox's  
where Merle lived you know and she stayed there and while they  
were <sup>down</sup> there..I don't know who done it but they went and cut our hams  
and side meat and all that stuff. They had no right to do it.

I: They had no right to

N: I tell you they was treated just as dirty as anybody could have been treated. I don't think *Melissa* ever did get over it and

I: No he didn't.

N: And Claire was a long time...and I believe it actually drove him to his grave.

I: I think so too. Yea. Literally that has been the one thing that has been ashamed about the park.

N: That's right.

I: Everything else has been done...fine...but not that'. I don't see why he couldn't have been allowed to continue that store until he died.

N: That's right.

I: They left Annie Shenk. They let her stay there in the park.

N: Yea they did.

I: The rest of the names you have here

N: They went out

I: Do you know where they went most of them.

N: Well, no I don't. They moved out.

I: Then you lost contact with them.

N: One of them moved down this side down in a little hollow I do know that. Then Beahm's lived there close they went to New Market.

I: That far?

N: Well up in there somewhere; I could not tell you exactly the name of the place.

I: Did any of them go to that development, Ida, that they made for

the people, park people, that moved out of the park?

N: Not that I know of

I: Uhhum

N: And <sup>carry</sup>~~Claire~~ had *meaning machine*  
and she never did know where it went. Never could find it. They  
done something with it, I don't know what. And she thought so  
much of that. And my mother *wrote on it & wrote & wrote.*

I: Ah

N: No I'll never forget that.

I: No

N: And poor Ms. <sup>Willis</sup>~~Willows~~ and she come down there and laid <sup>her head</sup> on <sup>carry</sup>~~Claire~~  
and cried like a baby.

I: How did Mr. Cliser court your sister.

N: Well he taught school.

I: OH, uhhuh.

N: We <sup>to him</sup>went to school I reckon only two years. Now he walked from  
that mountain <sup>clear across</sup> to that school room ever morning and ever evening.

I: So he was your teacher?

N: Yea.

I: Oh uhhum.

N: I got married. <sup>carry</sup>~~Claire~~ went one year after I got married. And then  
after that I think she said he wrote her a letter and wanted her to  
come <sup>to school</sup>..she didn't say if she answered him..but anyway she come up <sup>from</sup>  
the Lutheran Church one Sunday ..her and her girl friend, and he  
overheard her and I think he asked her for a date.

I: I think that's beautiful. He must have been very young to be a  
teacher

N: Well he wasn't very old. He was older than her but not much.

I: Oh of course, right.

N: Well I guess reason <sup>he</sup> ~~you~~ wanted to talk to her.. *I was more for*  
cutting up you know..  
she was more settled or something more quiet.

I: Yea

N: There wasn't any meanness I done or anything..I had more foolish-  
ness .. nothing out of the way.

I: No

Well then when you had a date at home you weren't chaperoned.

N: No.

I; How about laundry. How did you do laundry?

N: Well we had two big tubs after I got big enough, well before I  
was big enough the two older girls, would wash through the first  
water on a scrub board and throw them over in another tub and  
the other girl would wash and then put them over in the rinse  
water..hung em up. Claire and me did the same thing after we  
was big enough. Then the next day they'd be dry. We taken them  
down .. ironed them. Sometimes it took an hour,two hours.

I: You didn't boil them.

N: Yes we did.

I: Yea. That was a lot of work.

N: It was. A great big kettle.

I: How did you get the water ? Take it from the spring?

N: *We had* ~~It was~~ running water. It was a spring,yes. I don;t know how far  
it was. I guess from *here to* Virginia's and it come down a pipe.  
And it furnished water forus and Sam Batman's house too.

I: Very good.

N: Yes they would rub em in water and throw them in boiling water and then rinse them and then take them out. Blue them. Starch them. I done a lot of that after I moved over here to tell you the truth about it.

I: You know that lye soap is certainly <sup>wonderful</sup> good soap.

N: Yes it is.

I: It is so soft and good on your hands.

N: You know what? They had me run the motel down here and ofcourse they had the little individual soaps and of course they weren't allowed to let anyone else use them but the one person. And they'd gather them up ever day. And put new ones down. Virginia brought a paper sack full of em over and said Aunt Blanche what you reckon <sup>me</sup> could you do. I said well I'll show you. So I put <sup>them in</sup> a great big kettle boiled them..course the boiling woulda killed the germs, but I wanted them clean anyway so I put them in a kettle and boiled it and if you wait just one minute I'll show you something.

I: The home where you were brought up was it wood or rock.

N: The foundation was rock. the rest was wood. <sup>Started out with</sup> put <sup>just</sup> on the rock. Course I don't know how they had this weather boarding. It was weather boarded.

I: How old was it.

N: Well they lived in another house but not in my recollection but up the road a piece..Now I'll be 95 in October and my sister next to me, she was about six years older and I think maybe she was a baby <sup>built the house +</sup> when they moved there.

I: I see.

N: So its that old. It's over a hundred years old.



I: Uhhum. Yea. Did you hear of any of the men in the mountains going into the Cival War or maybe World War I.

N: No.

I: I was just wondering. Did you ever hear any stories of where these people came from?

N: Some people older than me heard them talking about some war that they had then. My Uncle Jim Batman was in it.

I: What was your maiden name?

N: Blanche Batman. A sister to Frank Batman.

I: Are you kin to Frank Griffith?

N: Yea, his mother was my niece.

I: Now have you any idea where the Batmans came from. How did they get here.

N: Well the Batman's the way I understood it, I was told they come from over across *the other side of* the mountain.

I: Like over in Rockingham County and over in there.

N: Yea. My daddy's people.

I: Yea. I wonder what brought them here?

N: Now I couldn't tell you that. I don't know.

I: You know what makes me mad? No one sat around *of an* ~~ever~~ evening talking about these things that really you'd think they say..Now boys and girls look..your greatgrandfather came from so and so and did such and such. Wouldn't you thank they would and they never did.

N: I think my daddy's mother was a Roudabush and I've been told that they was a little kin to Miller Roudabush.

I: Oh uhhuh.

N: And my mother was a Fox. She was from around *here*.

I: Yea, uhhum. By the way what music did they play?

N: Well my daddy played the violin. Do you know a man by the name of Barham..that used to play..Tom Barham?

I: No.

N: Well they was friends and I think maybe distant kin, and he drank so, *that* ~~the~~ Barham; and he would come up to my daddy's..he thought so much of my daddy..and sometimes he'd come *here* ~~home~~ drunk; and he could play the violin so good. Him and my daddy would play together.

I: What tunes did he play, do you remember?

N: Fisher's *W*ornpipe and stuff like that.

I: Fisher's *W*ornpipe?

N: Yea, is one. I don't know if I can think of any more or not.

I: Would anyone dance when they would play?

N: Yes they had dances; but, that was before I was old enough.

I: Oh, sure before you were able *to*.

N: They had dances.

I: Did they have them in a house or in a barn or where?

N: Mostly in a house.

I: Move all the furniture out and all?

N: Yea.

I: Uhhum.

N: I never went to a dance in my life . Never did. To tell you the truth *I don't know whether the older girls did or not* my daddy just wasn't in for it. He was so strict on us. But still...

I: Well, he had a lot of children to watch out for.

N: Yes he did. And they had to go pretty straight I'll tell you that.

I: Sure

N: That's more than a lot of them are doing these days.

I: That's right. I wonder how your mother..of course she trained all of you to help..

N: Oh yes, yes.

I: But really that was a lot of work for her.

N: Yes it was.

I: There was all the canning as well as the drying of the fruits and vegetables.

N: And you know we worked in the garden a lot. We done...my daddy hardly..he done the plowing and the planting...and all but after that my mother and us took it over. He plowed and they'd run through it but we would have to thin the corn, and hoe it up and the beans and everything like that. *of course she did it too.*

I: Did you ever have string bean parties?

N: No

I: Corn shucking parties?

N: They had corn shucking parties but not string bean parties.

I: Uhhuh

N: I ~~remember~~ them have corn shucking parties *up* in the barn before.

I: Yea and what happened if you got a red ear?

N: You was to kiss a girl.

I: Everybody hoped for a red ear. You said you couldn't remember anything. You've told me..worlds..do you realize that? This really has been simply marvelous what you've told me.

N: Well, I've told you near as I know how to tell you the truth.

I: This really has been fasinating. Don't you wish life was like it was then.

N; Yes I do

I: Oh, it was a good life.

N: It was hard work; but, you *had love*.

I: Yea, you all worked together, you were all so close.

N: There is so much meanness going on now and you know my mother's daddy lived down in a hollow and I'll say it was at least a mile and a half anyway. And them days you could send anybody anywhere and you never thought anything about it. And she sent me a many times to ..fix her daddy something good to eat.. and sent me over there with it. It'd take me a good half hour or three *quarters* ~~four~~ to walk it.

I: Uhhum.

N: And you didn't have to be afraid anybody was going to bother you. There wasn't anybody those days to.

I: They never stole, they never cheated, Never lied.

N: No sir, that's right. I sit and study sometimes what a terrible change there are.

I: People aren't kept busy.

N: That's right. Well we never thought about anybody .

I: No. They were all such independent, strong, healthy people.

N: I can remember the first time .. now we didn't have any..now understand I like colored people..but we didn't have any colored people. There was one family that lived about a mile down the road from us. My daddy had a big chestnut orchard and we'd go ~~down~~ *up* there and pick up chestnuts and sell some and I don't know how big ~~it~~ it was..maybe as

as long as from here up to Cathy and Eddie's trailer..but it wasn't very wide and it had a lot of chestnut trees..young ones coming on you know. We'd go pick and uh sometimes we'd sell them. My mother said uh..~~we had ever~~..them times remember when you'd get them little five pound sugar sacks in a cloth she said why don't you get your little sack and put enough in it for Christmas and <sup>hang them</sup> ~~put it~~ in the cellar.

Well we did. And I had mine in there and I don't know whether they had their's in there or not. Anyway there was another boy who had come by when he was younger to work I knew him real good..kinda like the family. He was no kin to us at all. Just helped out a lot.

Then Woodrow's mother was married and <sup>their</sup> ~~his~~ house had burnt and my daddy had to go out there to the firehouse until they could make some arrangements. <sup>for her + the children.</sup> So her husband would come by and stay here a lot and

then would go about his work. Woodrow wasn't born. Anyway we had a lot of fun and foolishness. He drank a lot but he was one of the best hearted men I ever saw. Well I think he'd have taken the shirt off his back and give to somebody didn't have one and Woodrow <sup>was</sup> ~~is~~ a

lot like him. Anyway this Christmas is when I had the sack hanging

in the cellar. So my husband come up there ~~at~~ that night and <sup>we were</sup>

<sup>all in there</sup> we called it the <sup>parlor</sup> ~~holiday bag~~ and we were sitting around

there..a couple of the girls and Charlie Judd the one I'm telling you about and ~~the girls~~ come in sat down and talked,

kept passing chestnuts around. Well we was all eating chestnuts having

a nice time and when their time come they left and we all went to bed.

When I got up the next morning I thought <sup>to myself well I dreamed</sup> ~~was I dreaming~~..I went down- <sup>something</sup> stairs I said mother I dreamed last night someone went into the cellar

and cut a hole that long in my chestnut bag. Oh she said that was just

a dream. I said well I don't know I'm going to see. She said you

know nobody done that. Well I went out there and it was the truth. It was a hat hanging there and half of them was gone. And the slit was cut just exactly like I dreamed it. Well the doctor or Charlie one done it. So I went to em and one wouldn't tell on the other and it went on that a way a while and after we was married a right smart little while I was down helping Elmer fix up hay a holding it for him and I saw someone coming up the road and I said that looks like Charlie Judd. He <sup>had</sup> ~~was~~ married and had moved to Harrisonburg. I said that looks like Charlie Judd. He said well deed it is. Well he <sup>saw us</sup> ~~talked~~ down there and he come on up and talked a little bit. <sup>Elmer</sup> ~~Naomi~~ said we bout done said you and Blanche go on up to the house..I'll be up there directly. Well we went on up to the house and sat down in the kitchen and sat there a right <sup>Talking about old times</sup> ~~smart little time~~ and he said he had to go. I said can't you stay all night. No I have to go back. I said Charlie do you remember...

I: Don't tell me

N: I said do you remember when one of you men cut a hole in my chestnut bag..took half my chestnuts. He said Blanche I didn't do it. He said Doc done it. And you know it just seems like it happened that a way. We talked a little bit more. <sup>I knewed he</sup> ~~I~~ said Charlie <sup>told the truth</sup> Ethel, that's Woodrow's sister, is in Harrisonburg Hospital you ought to go down and see her <sup>he used to like her</sup> ~~she~~ is in the hospital. She was married then but anyway you ought to go see her. He said well I'm going on home , but maybe I will. I said go on down there she'd be glad to see you. And he left. This was on Thursday. And on Monday morning a message came from Harrisonburg somebody called and said that Charlie was dead. That he died that night. Well I didn't

even know he had a heart condition. It was just like a shock.

I: Sure.

N: But it just seemed so strange that he told me. *this*.

I: Otherwise you'd have always wondered

N: That's exactly right.

I; You'd have always said is it him or is it him.